



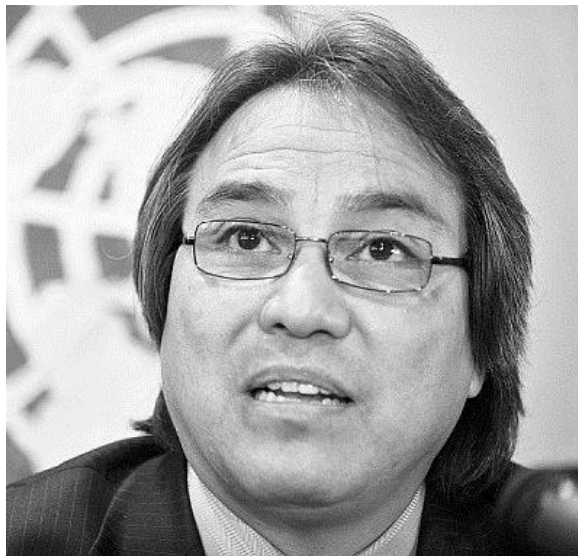
***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
October 7-11, 2013***

UN envoy to offer Canada advice on First Nations consultations

[StarPhoenix](#)

October 7, 2013

Peter O'Neil



UN Indigenous Peoples advocate James Anaya, arrives in Canada this week. He will visit Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. Photograph by: Johan Ordonez, Getty Images File Photo, Postmedia News

The United Nations' advocate for the world's Aboriginal Peoples says he is keen to provide the UN-wary Harper government with "constructive" advice on oilsands pipelines, land claims, poverty and other touchy issues when he finally makes his first visit to Canada this week.

James Anaya has mostly been met with hostility from Ottawa since 2011, when his criticism of Third World-level housing conditions at the remote Ontario community of Attawapiskat prompted a government official to accuse him of engaging in a "publicity stunt."

And it has taken well over a year since his early-2012 request to visit Canada before Ottawa finally agreed to invite him.

But the internationally recognized expert on aboriginal rights said he expects "fruitful" discussions, and will offer advice on the need to properly consult first nations before proceeding with mines, pipelines and other projects.

"My approach will be to provide preliminary observations that will be constructive, as well as to give voice to the concerns I will have heard," Anaya told The Vancouver Sun.

And part of his message is that the UN's 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that first nations should consent to resource projects on their land, does not mean they should have a veto.

Instead, he said governments and industry leaders who want to meet the test of international indigenous law must focus on ensuring projects don't interfere with the human, cultural, spiritual and economic rights of Aboriginal Peoples.

"It really has to shift to a rightsbased approach rather than over who has the last say, who has a veto power," he said.

Anaya, a widely published University of Arizona law professor, was named in 2008 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He is a member of the Apache and Purepecha first nations.

He will spend four days in Ontario, and one in each of Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. He will meet with West Coast first nations leaders and B.C. government officials in Vancouver on Thursday.

He will present his preliminary findings at an Ottawa news conference on Oct. 15, and then return to the U.S. to prepare a report that will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September of 2014.

He has been repeatedly urged by Canadian aboriginal leaders, long frustrated by the slow pace of progress on key issues, to take a strong stand in favour of their concerns.

His report will look at "reconciliation, governance and self-government; lands and resources; and health, education and economic development."

Anaya said he has been made well aware of B.C. aboriginal complaints that Ottawa and the energy industry are aggressively pushing pipeline megaprojects over the objections of many first nations because the projects are in the "national interest."

"It is certainly a matter that has been brought to my attention and that I'm hoping to learn about," said Anaya.

"I come at that with an open mind, understanding the complexity of the situation, and of course with the sensitivity of the concerns of the people most affected by it."

Anaya, who presented a report to the UN in July on aboriginal rights in relation to natural resource projects, said he expects to offer federal and provincial politicians advice on how they can best meet their obligations to fully consult first nations.

Anaya is one of the authors of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which says aboriginals must give "free, prior and informed consent" before resource projects on their territories proceed.

Canada, joining the U.S., Australia and New Zealand, opposed the declaration amid concerns that this consent amounted to a veto.

The Harper government reversed itself in 2010 and endorsed the declaration, but added the caveat that it was an "aspirational" and "non-legally binding" document that "does not reflect customary international law, nor change Canadian laws."

The federal government has recently stepped up efforts to ensure it has met its duty to consult first nations on the two pipeline projects proposed by Enbridge and Kinder Morgan. That duty is spelled out by the Supreme Court of Canada in several judgments, although Anaya said Canada is also obliged under the declaration to obtain consent.

He said the UN declaration isn't intended to give first nations a formal veto.

"The declaration doesn't say indigenous people have a right to withhold consent. It says states shall consult with indigenous peoples with the objective of achieving their consent. The sense there is that the parties come together and work hard and resolve to arrive at a consensual arrangement and that is the norm.

"That has to be what the debate has to be about. Not, 'Who has a veto?' "
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Idle No More protesters call for day of action

[CTV News](#)

October 7, 2013



Demonstrators with the Idle No More movement block an intersection in downtown London Ontario, Thursday, March 21, 2013. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/ Geoff Robins)

Organizers of the Idle No More movement are calling for a global day of action today, with dozens of demonstrations planned across Canada.

The events will coincide with the 250th anniversary of the British Royal Proclamation of 1763, Canada's founding document which said that indigenous land rights must be recognized.

The Idle No More movement began as a Twitter hashtag and spread to communities across Canada last winter, as aboriginal groups protested the federal government's omnibus Bill C-45.

First Nations groups said the bill threatened their treaty rights and demanded that the Conservative government directly address the issue, as well as poor living conditions in many of their communities.

The chief of Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario, Theresa Spence, became the face of Idle No More when she embarked on a six-week hunger protest in early December, subsisting on fish broth and tea.

Spence's protest and ongoing demonstrations from coast to coast led to a meeting between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Assembly of First Nations chiefs, but critics say that nothing has changed since.

Idle No More events are being planned Monday in Victoria, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto and other Canadian cities.

In a video posted on [Idle No More's website](#), National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Shawn Atleo says: "This is a moment to hold a mirror up to reflect on the deepest, darkest corners of Canada's history, reaching out to Canadians saying: 'This is your moment, too.'"

A number of communities in other countries, including the United States and Britain, are planning solidarity events.

In addition to the British Royal Proclamation, Monday's events will also recognize the arrival of a United Nations fact-finder who has been tasked with reviewing the rights of Canada's indigenous people and the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Law professor James Anaya, the UN's special rapporteur on indigenous rights, will be in the country for nine days to work on his report to the UN Human Rights council. He is scheduled to meet with representatives of First Nations and the federal government.

Jack Woodward: The real anniversary of Canada's founding

[National Post](#)

October 7, 2013

Jack Woodward



No government in Canada plans to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country. On Oct. 7, 2013, one of the oldest continuous written constitutions on the planet reaches a quarter of a millennium. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 — Canada's founding document — stands for four enduring principles: democracy, the rule of law, fairness for veterans, and protection of aboriginal lands.

RP 1763 was a colonial statute passed by the government of Britain under the Whig (Liberal) Prime Minister George Grenville. Grenville's government renamed New France, the country that is now Ontario and Quebec, as "Quebec" and went on to

"erect" a new government on the English model. No mention of "Canada" yet, the name came along after the country was created. But this is what made Canada a separate country in North America, and it pre-dates the founding of the United States. The much-celebrated constitution of 1867, which chops Canada into provinces (for the second time, because the first attempt at creating provinces in 1791 was abandoned in 1840) is just one of several technical fixes on the basic nation-building of 1763.

Canada's 250 year old constitution was, in its time, a progressive document from a liberal government in the Age of Enlightenment, in stark contrast to the feudal monarchist colonial regime it displaced. It sets up assemblies and courts to "care for the Liberties and Properties" of the inhabitants and future settlers. This was well prior to the American and French Revolutions.

After establishing the local assemblies and a legal system, the next order of business was to take care of the soldiers and sailors who fought for the Crown against the French. Every private was to get at least 50 acres, and officers would get up to 5,000 acres, depending on their rank. The tradition of rewarding servicemen with grants of land continued in Canada for another 200 years, with the Soldier Settlement Acts and finally the Veterans Land Act following the Second World War. Of all the legacies of RP 1763, this careful attention to the rewarding of veterans is the only one to fall into disuse, and only just recently.

Then came the Proclamation's famous Indian policy. RP 1763 establishes a huge land reserve of the "Hunting Grounds" of the "Nations or Tribes of Indians" called the "Indian Territories". No trespassing, survey or sale of those lands was allowed without the consent of the tribes, and consent could only be given at a public meeting in the presence of the Crown. The Indian nations were to be protected from the "Great Frauds and Abuses" of the past by giving the Indians an absolute veto over settlement in their lands. Such transactions were called "treaties" or "surrenders." This basic policy continues in the Indian Act today — a 250 year policy of preventing sales of Indian lands except through a public vote of the tribal membership, confirmed by the Crown. The result is that most Indian reserves in Canada remain more or less intact, when lands all around them have been sold and re-sold multiple times.

Some Canadians are now looking to First Nations with the hope that they will use these treaty rights as a bulwark against dangerously rapid development of resources

RP 1763 is the origin of treaty-making with First Nations — a process that remains unfinished in British Columbia and parts of the North. The end products of treaties are "treaty rights", constitutionally protected since 1982, and recently proven to be potent laws for the protection of Canada's environment. The right to hunt and fish, typically central to every treaty, becomes the right to healthy habitat capable of supporting a meaningful wildlife harvest. Some Canadians are now looking to First

Nations with the hope that they will use these treaty rights as a bulwark against dangerously rapid development of resources.

250 years ago Canada was set up to be a democratic country governed by the rule of law, with fair treatment for those who fought wars for her existence, and justice for the indigenous people who made room for the settlers. It was a wise document for its time, establishing the principles that govern Canada to this day. It's worth celebrating.

National First Nations chief braced for 'paternalistic' throne speech

[The Tyee](#)

October 2013 13:56

Laura Beaulne-Stuebing

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo says he fears the upcoming throne speech will feature the government's "paternalistic at best, and assimilationist at worst, approaches" toward aboriginal issues.

It's an approach "we've seen from every government. It's an annual activity," he said.

Taking questions from reporters on the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 Atleo said that -- with the arrival of UN special special rapporteur on indigenous rights, James Anaya -- now is the time to change the channel and set a different tone in the relationship between First Nations communities and the federal government.

Atleo outlined what he'd like to see in the throne speech, set for Oct. 16. The AFN, he said, wants four things: predictable and sustainable funding based on First Nations control; First Nations authority over education; a commitment to a full national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women; and reform of the comprehensive claims policy, which he says is "deeply flawed."

He added that First Nations are concerned about the upcoming and still yet unseen education bill, which some say could find itself in the throne speech.

Atleo said there's a shared sense among First Nations and the government about where the bill should go -- namely, that education shouldn't be in the hands of the minister for aboriginal affairs -- but not a shared sense of how to get there. The blueprint AANDC released back in July has been lambasted by communities, and by Atleo himself, as another example of paternalism on the government's side.

Monday marks the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 -- a document, seen by many as the "Magna Carta" for aboriginals in North America -- which laid the foundations for treaty-making between First Nations and the Crown.

Atleo said he welcomes statements made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Gov. Gen. David Johnston commemorating the proclamation's anniversary and noting its significance to Canadian history.

"It is an important moment," Atleo added. "What's even more important than the words that we're hearing, including the words that go back to the 2008 apology: it's time for action. Action on education, action on building our economies, action on supporting First Nations to develop and deliver a vision for sustainability for the living environment."

Days like Monday bring Canada's indigenous people to the international spotlight, as the country and its record on aboriginal issues comes under the microscope of the UN rapporteur, Atleo noted -- Anaya will tour Canada until Oct. 15.

Days like Monday also remind Canadians how little they know about aboriginal history.

"I think there's been greater support, perhaps, for many in Canada to understand the human rights plights of people in other parts of the world," Atleo said, noting an essay written by pollster Allan Gregg about the historic figure Tecumseh that picked up considerable attention this past weekend.

"I strongly encourage First Nations and all Canadians to participate in events here in Ottawa and across the country, to learn more about our shared history and our shared relationship, understanding that we all have responsibilities to uphold our promises to one another," he said.

"This is how we will move forward to realize the full potential of First Nations and Canada."

AFN regional chief Perry Bellegarde, from Saskatchewan, and other First Nations representatives are currently in London, U.K. to participate in events commemorating the Royal Proclamation.

After a reception at the Canadian Museum of Civilization Monday evening, Atleo will be heading to London as well for an event at the Canadian High Commission, putting emphasis on the relationship between First Nations and the Crown. He will later to deliver speeches at Oxford University and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Laura Beaulne-Stuebing reports for iPolitics, where this article first appeared.

Aboriginal issues missing in civic election

[CBC News](#)

Oct 08, 2013 8:57 PM MT



Kyle Brown is running for city council in Ward 6. Brown, who is of Metis heritage, is one of the few indigenous candidates in this election. (CBC)

Over the next four years, Edmonton is expected to surpass Winnipeg as the Canadian city with the most aboriginal residents – but that fact isn't reflected in the race to become the city's next mayor.

Kerry Diotte, Karen Leibovici and Don Iveson – the trio considered the leading candidates in the race – say little to nothing about indigenous people on their campaign websites.

When asked about the issue last week, both Iveson and Leibovici said they were planning to release something later in the campaign.

Diotte had nothing specific to offer beyond stating how important it is to make the city welcoming for everyone.

"Similar to the army of people who are coming to this city for jobs and so forth, we've got to be inclusive to all of them, and we've got to make sure that they feel that they can contribute and that's vitally important," he said.

Aboriginal voters could make difference in close race

CBC election analyst Aaron Paquette thinks the lack of outreach by the main candidates is a mistake.

Paquette is an Edmonton artist who played a part in this year's Idle No More campaign by creating the satirical "Ottawapiskat" hashtag on Twitter to call attention to prejudicial attitudes against First Nations finances and governance.

He believes that votes from indigenous residents could make a difference in what may become a close election.

"This is a community that is highly politicized and they will get out to vote," he said. "And they will vote for a candidate that they feel is looking after their best interests."

Ward 6 candidate Kyle Brown is one of several indigenous people running for council in this election.

He believes aboriginal issues haven't become prominent in this election because Edmontonians mistakenly believe that indigenous people don't make up a large part of the population.

Brown, who is of Métis heritage, said perceived stigma may keep some people from talking about their aboriginal background.

"I don't feel that stigma should be there, it's something that we need to change," he said.

"We need to show people, you know what, it doesn't matter what our race is behind us – it's what we're going to do for you."

However, Brown believes having an aboriginal member on council is important.

"A lot of people would love to get their voice out there – and unfortunately they come and they sit on the wrong side of council and they don't get their voices heard very frequently or very loudly," he said.

"Whereas, if we are on council, we can make motions, we can make a difference in that aspect."

With files from the CBC's Gareth Hampshire and Trisha Estabrooks

Canada: Can Individuals Assert Collective Aboriginal And Treaty Rights? Maybe.

[Davis LLP](#)

October 9 2013

Laura Easton

On May 9, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada issued its decision in [Behn v Moulton Contracting Ltd., 2013 SCC 26](#). Moulton brought an action against several members of the Aboriginal Fort Nelson First Nation ("FNFN") after said individuals had erected a camp blocking the company's access to its logging sites. Moulton had received

authorization from the Ministry to harvest timber on the FNFN lands. Throughout the licensing process, the Behn family headman had not responded to any of the consultation efforts, and first challenged the Government's authorizations only after issuance. Neither the FNFN nor the defendant individuals raised concerns with Moulton when the licences were originally granted.

The defendant individuals tried to assert a defence on the basis of breach of treaty rights and breach of duty to consult. The Court held that the duty to consult was owed to the collective, and could only be raised by individuals if said individuals are authorized to represent the collective. As there was no evidence in the pleadings that the FNFN had authorized the Behns to represent the First Nation to contest the legality of the timber sale licences and road access permit. The defendant individuals also asserted a breach of treaty rights to hunt and trap. The Court acknowledged that treaty rights could possibly be collective or individual, but declined to make a final decision on the matter by determining the case on abuse of process.

The Court dismissed the appeal as an abuse of process, as the individuals had failed to raise their concerns with Moulton, setting up a camp blocking Moulton's access only after the company had incurred substantial costs. According to the Supreme Court, "[t]o allow the Behns to raise their defence based on treaty rights and on a breach of the duty to consult at this point would be tantamount to condoning self-help remedies and would bring the administration of justice into disrepute [para 42]."

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

B.C. Treaty Commission Report Slams Feds, Province

[Huffington Post](#)

October 9, 2013

Dirk Meissner



The B.C. Liberals and the federal Conservatives are erecting barriers to the First Nation treaty process, says commissioner Sophie Pierre.

VICTORIA - Short-term goals and endless studies by Stephen Harper's Conservatives and Christy Clark's Liberals have created bureaucratic barriers to negotiating lasting treaty settlements with British Columbia's First

Nations, says B.C.'s chief treaty commissioner.

Sophie Pierre said Tuesday the federal and B.C. governments appear more interested in avoiding or delaying treaty settlements instead of supporting negotiations that would result in land-claims settlements and self-government for First Nations.

At a news conference releasing the treaty commission's annual report, "Pathway to Change," Pierre said the governments should stop considering treaty negotiations as a government program for aboriginals and start serious talks.

After 21 years of treaty negotiations, just two treaties have been finalized, while 18 others are at the final agreement or advanced agreement-in-principle stages.

There are more than 200 First Nations in B.C. and less than 20 have treaties, with the majority of those settlements dating back to the mid-1800s when the province was a British colony.

Pierre said First Nations are looking for solid direction from the federal government that it is committed to negotiating treaties in B.C. She said the statement of direction on behalf of the government must go beyond the letter the treaty commission received from Prime Minister Stephen Harper this year saying Ottawa considers treaties good for the economy.

"Our message is we need to have this oversight, not just one letter coming from the prime minister," she said. "If we can get the focus of the federal government to look at their mandates, to look at what's holding up this process and actually get the push, the direction from the prime minister's office that says, 'yes, this is a priority, we need to get it done.'"

"If you don't have that, it just spins its wheels like it's always done," said Pierre.

She said First Nations want the prime minister's office to declare "this is good for Canada."

Instead treaty talks are bogged down over bureaucratic federal concerns about dividing salmon resources with First Nations and federal studies to review the treaty process, Pierre said.

The last time Ottawa, B.C. and the First Nations formally met to discuss treaty issues was in May 2012, she said.

Treaty commissioner Dave Haggard, a former B.C. union leader, said governments need to take the negotiating process more seriously because the alternative involves endless, costly court battles.

"What can British Columbians do about that?" he said. "I say you can talk to your MP's, talk to your MLA's and say we support First Nations getting a fair and just settlement on the land question in this province," he said.

Pierre said the treaty commission remains concerned with the B.C. government's focus on reaching interim measures deals with First Nations that avoid complete treaties in favour of pre-treaty agreements that focus on single land or economic issues.

"Budgetary limitations have certainly affected timely negotiations but the real concern is the apparent move away from long-term solutions through treaty in favour of short-term economic opportunities," stated Pierre in the annual report.

B.C.'s aboriginal relations and reconciliation minister John Rustad said in a statement that B.C. remains committed to reaching complete treaties, but the interim deals are a step towards final settlements.

"We are making progress, but the reality is treaties are complex and take time, which is why we also look to incremental treaty agreements as a way to bring certainty for investment, and economic and social benefits to First Nation communities more quickly," he said.

Federal aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt could not be immediately reached for comment.

The First Nations Summit, B.C.'s largest aboriginal organization, said in a statement that Ottawa and B.C. must move away from studying the treaty process and embark on talks that lead to treaties.

"We agree the time has come for all parties, in particular B.C. and Canada, to get on with the task at hand and refrain from any further studies and demonstrate the political will to build relationships with First Nations based on mutual recognition and respect, aimed at achieving reconciliation", said Grand Chief Edward John.

B.C.'s Opposition New Democrat Leader Adrian Dix said the absence of a dedicated government approach to resolving the treaty issue could have serious economic and social consequences in B.C.

"This is an issue that everyone acknowledges, First Nations, the businesses community, communities across B.C. is a central issue, and governments at the federal and provincial level are not doing the work required," he said. "We're 20 years into this treaty process. We need to see more progress than this."

The B.C. treaty commission was formed in September 1992 to oversee a treaty negotiation process.

First Nations treaties endlessly blocked by bureaucratic barriers, commissioner claims

[Regina Leader-Post](#)

October 8, 2013

Dirk Meissner



VKA-10/15/07-Victoria-Maxine Matilip of the Kwakiutl First Nation holds a sign in front of the BC legislature with a crowd of protesters who oppose the B.C. treaty process. The legislature opened with the Tsawwassen First Nation agreement introduction in Victoria, BC on Monday, October 15, 2007. Photograph by: Darren Stone, PROVINCE

VICTORIA — Short-term goals and endless studies by Stephen Harper's Conservatives and Christy Clark's Liberals have created bureaucratic barriers to negotiating lasting treaty settlements with B.C.'s First Nations, says the province's chief treaty commissioner.

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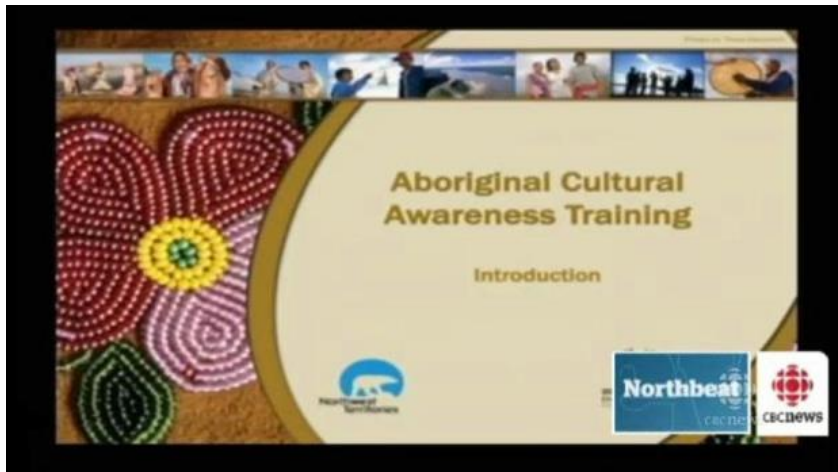
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GNWT offers online education in residential school history

[CBC News](#)

Oct 08, 2013 4:35 PM CT



Online training

The Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission says all professionals need mandatory training on residential schools.

Justice Murray Sinclair wants anyone working with aboriginal people to be required to

understand their history.

In the Northwest Territories, the government has created an online training course to do just that. The website can let virtually anyone learn about the territory's people and culture online.

There are four modules, each about two hours long, in the Aboriginal Culture Awareness Training, each developed specifically for people who work in the territorial government.

'They need to know why people are the way we are in the North here' - Former residential school student Francois Paulette

"This is really important to us," government spokesperson Sheila Bassi-Kellett said. "It's very, very important that every member of the public service of the GNWT has a knowledge and appreciation and understanding and respect for the diverse aboriginal cultures across the NWT."

The training material took a year to develop with the help of six regional aboriginal groups and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

"We see this training being really valuable for people who have come from down south and have come to the [Northwest Territories] to work for the GNWT in the public service for the first time, its their first exposure to the North," Sheila Bassi-Kellett said.



Former student Francois Paulette says people absolutely need training in the history of residential schools.

That includes a component about the history of residential schools. Former student Francois

Paulette says people absolutely need this training.

"They need to know why people are the way we are in the North here, the whole colonial impact by the residential school, and the aftermath and the people that are suffering because of residential school."

Online training

Paulette says he would prefer that sort of training happen in person, not just online.

Bassi-Kellett says the government will be including facilitated sessions. "This is highly sensitive and we know that there can be cases where this may provoke some really intense feelings among people and it may bring things out that perhaps they had tucked away in the backs of their minds," Bassi-Kellett said. "So we've been very deliberate in trying to find facilitators that have a counselling component."

Right now, civil servants are not required to take the Aboriginal Awareness Culture Training. But the plan is to eventually make it mandatory.

First Nations treaties endlessly blocked by bureaucratic barriers, commissioner claims

[Regina Leader-Post](#)

October 8, 2013

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B.C. First Nations chief relays pipeline safety worries

[Globe and Mail](#)

Oct. 08 2013, 9:38 PM EDT

Mark Hume

Shortly after Roland Willson became chief of the West Moberly First Nations in northern British Columbia, he responded to an oil spill where a ruptured pipeline had poured more than 6,000 barrels of crude into Pine River.

Chief Willson said he had flashbacks of that 2000 accident recently when he saw how high water had torn up heavy concrete mats protecting two pipelines crossing a creek in the same general region as the Pine River spill.

"When I stumbled across this pipeline exposed in the creek, all those nightmares came back ... that was the first thing that came in my head," said Chief Willson, who has written a letter to government and industry expressing his concerns about pipeline safety.

Spectra Energy, Pembina Pipeline Corp. and the BC Oil and Gas Commission all say the exposed pipelines in Angusmac Creek are not of immediate concern and appropriate steps are being taken to remedy the situation.

But Chief Willson, whose letter underlines the growing public vigilance of pipeline issues in B.C., said the incident is a reminder that while several new projects are proposed in the province, there is already an existing infrastructure that needs to be watched.

"They are not addressing the old problems, but they are adding on possible new problems," he said.

Chief Willson said he was hunting when he came to Angusmac Creek and saw the exposed pipelines. He said the current was eroding the creek bed around the pipelines.

"There was enough water running in the creek to roll that big concrete mat into a ball. Now if it can do that with a 5,000-pound mat, what's it going to do to a 12-inch pipe laying in the water?" he asked. "They are saying there was no [safety] issue, but an exposed pipe can't be good."

In his letter to government and industry, Chief Willson sought assurance that the problem was being looked at.

"We have experienced the devastation of an oil spill before," he wrote. "This is a disaster waiting to happen. It frightens us to think what might have happened if we did not find this problem and the 2014 spring runoff occurred. The current system Canada and B.C. are using clearly does not adequately protect the land and the people that rely on it for cultural subsistence."

But industry representatives said they were aware of the situation at Angusmac Creek before Chief Willson wrote and repair work had long been planned.

"Pembina is absolutely committed to the health, safety and environmental stewardship of our pipelines throughout their life," said Shawn Davis, manager of communications for Pembina Pipeline Corp.

She said the company became aware of the problem in 2011, did some mitigation work in 2012 by placing heavy, ArmorFlex concrete mats in the stream to protect the pipes. Then spring runoff tore up some of the mats.

"And so through the summer ... we've been monitoring the location and we have plans in place to restore the ArmorFlex matting and restore the cover for the pipeline this fall," she said. "The reason we couldn't do it earlier is because we had to wait until the water levels had decreased so it would be safe to complete the work."

Gary Weilinger, vice-president, external affairs, for Spectra Energy, said the pipeline right of way is occupied by Pembina and the two companies had discussed the problem. Pembina is taking the lead on repairs.

"Pembina was not concerned. We had done an engineering assessment and it's largely cosmetic," he said. "Our pipeline itself is not in any risk or danger."

Hardy Friedrich, a spokesman for the BC Oil and Gas Commission, said inspectors were sent to the site the day after the West Moberly First Nations letter arrived.

"The Commission and Canada's National Energy Board are working to ensure the crossing is properly restored in accordance with both federal and provincial requirements," he stated in an e-mail.

Hate by numbers

tbnewswatch.com

October 9, 2013

Matt Vis



Const. Larry Baxter, the Aboriginal liaisons officer with the Thunder Bay Police Service, speaks at Tuesday's community presentation to raise hate crime awareness.

Richness of The Season at Your Feet A new harvest of shoes have arrived! Rich with style and laced with luxuries. Comfort isn't just for athletic shoes anymore. Stand out - and stand up - all day long. Take another look at Stride Footwear! [Click Here](#) Zero reported hate crimes in the city doesn't mean Thunder Bay is free from hate, says one national expert.

What the statistics likely means is there is a lack of reporting.

The Thunder Bay Police Service held a morning training session, followed by an afternoon community presentation on Tuesday at Ka-Na-Chi-Hih with Statistics Canada's national training officer to focus on hate crime and how to accurately report it.

Warren Silver, the policing services program's national training officer for Statistics Canada explained that the tracking of hate crime incidents across the country is growing, and said the city's reporting appears to be incomplete.

"There has been a big initiative for us to collect information on hate crime, so we've developed a standard training on hate crime that was developed for police to police to work on trying to get more and better reporting," Silver said.

"When you see the statistics we have comparing Thunder Bay to other cities across Canada, Thunder Bay has never reported any hate crime since we began collecting this about six years ago. I don't think anybody believes there is hate happening all over the world except Thunder Bay. I think it's much more a question that it's not being reported to police, or police aren't recognizing it."

The workshop was spurred by the city's police service to improve their tracking and reporting of hate crime, and improving trust within the group.

Aboriginal liaisons officer Const. Larry Baxter said it's important for people to report any cases of hate crime, which are crimes motivated by factors such as race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Baxter explained the purpose of the workshop was to show what a hate crime is and to educate the importance of reporting to create an accurate picture of what is happening in the community.

"If we don't have any victims coming forward, and if we as a police service aren't identifying it as such, we're not going to have any statistics," he said.

"If the perception is the police do care about these types of crimes I believe the trust will grow and we'll have more cooperation from the public when we need their assistance."

The training sessions are educating officers to focus on the three aspects of any crime, the incident, perpetrator and the victim.

From there the officers are to look at whether the crime was motivated by hate, and if it is confirmed or suspected they then identify the principle motivation and any further details that contributed to the motive.

Silver, who is a former police officer, said there needs to be a collaborative effort between both police and the general public to start making the reporting of hate crime common.

He equated hate crimes to what domestic violence was 20 years ago, where it was vastly underreported and police were not sure how to deal with it. Now domestic violence has strict procedures and protocols.

"I think a lot of it is outreach to the community, and working with the community groups. I think to get the public to report even the small things to police, even if they aren't criminal nature, police want to know about this," Silver said.

Silver is to work with the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service on Wednesday.

United Nations rapporteur hears Inuit groups' concerns

[Nunatsiq News](#)

October 10, 2013



Nunatsiavut president Sarah Leo, left, led an Inuit delegation that recently met with James Anaya, right, the UN's special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, who is touring Canada this week. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ITK)

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is visiting Canada this week to look at the human rights issues of Aboriginal peoples.

And Inuit groups want him to take note of one of the biggest challenges facing their communities — access to housing.

James Anaya, who teaches human rights law at the University of Arizona, began a fact-finding mission over the weekend that will take him across the country.

Although Anaya's tour won't take him to the any northern territories, he met with an Inuit delegation representing the board of directors of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada Oct. 7.

"There are many pressing issues we could have brought to the attention of the UN Rapporteur, but housing is an issue that cuts across an incredible array of social policy areas," said Nunatsiavut president Sarah Leo, who led the Inuit delegation, "from the spread of communicable disease to physical abuse to school attendance to the ability of individuals to participate in the developing economy."

"Critically, for Nunavik and Nunatsiavut, it is also a land claims implementation issue."

In a letter addressed to the UN rapporteur, ITK and ICC said about 33 per cent of Inuit live in crowded conditions, compared to just three per cent of Canada's total population.

"This chronic housing (shortage) has a severe impact on the improvement of our economic and social conditions through the Inuit Nunangat," the letter reads.

"Beyond these effects on the physical health of Inuit, there is significant anecdotal and some systematic evidence showing that a lack of adequate housing has deleterious effects on mental wellness."

Inuit groups continue to work with the Canadian government to elevate the standards of living in their communities “with limited success,” the letter continues.

The letter makes recommendations to address housing needs, requesting the UN rapporteur urge the Canadian government to:

- acknowledge it has the constitutional powers to solve housing shortages, which are not limited by provincial jurisdiction in the area of housing;
- invest in research that supports sustainable and culturally appropriate housing design, involving Inuit communities in the process;
- work with Inuit to create a National Inuit Housing Program.

Anaya is on tour throughout Canada until Oct. 15. The nine-day tour will take him to Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Anaya’s findings will be reflected in a preliminary report, submitted to Canada for consideration and then presented to the UN Human Rights Council.

The Special Rapporteur invites indigenous peoples and organizations to send information to indigenous@ohchr.org.

United Nations to get an earful from Sask. First Nations

[Prince Albert Daily Herald](#)

October 09, 2013

Tyler Clarke



Granted 15 minutes of face time with a United Nations representative, Prince Albert Grand Chief Ron Michel plans on getting straight to the point on Sunday. © United Nations photo

The United Nations’ special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples James Anaya.

“Our main focus is to make very clear that we are opposed to the imposed federal legislation,” Prince Albert Grand Council director of education

Edward Mirasty said of Michel’s speaking notes.

As reported last month, the Prince Albert Grand Council’s 12 member bands are joining a group of 74 bands within the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in

rejecting the federal government's First Nations Education Act by creating their own acts, tailored to teach band's cultural needs.

The federal government has stated that they plan on having the act in place by the 2014-15 school year.

"Through the development of our own education acts we are asserting our indigenous right and authority over our children's education, not only for this generation but for generations to come," Michel said at the time.

The United Nations' special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya, is currently touring Canada in order to prepare a report on the state of First Nations.

Anaya will be in Fort Qu'Appelle on Sunday afternoon. During his 15 minutes, Michel will point out Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, which states that indigenous people should have the right to establish and control their own education systems.

During his time in Saskatchewan, Anaya is expected to get an earful from Saskatchewan First Nations about what some perceive to be the federal government not following the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

For the Kaministikominahiko-skak Cree Nation, Anaya's visit will be about gaining attention about the band's lack of treaty rights, Chief John Dorion said.

Having gone to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the federal government and even United States President Barack Obama, Dorion said that he hopes his band's meeting with Anaya yields some results.

"I think our last hope is to go to the United Nations, because they've got quite a bit of clout, and they deal with nations --- and that's what we are," he said.

The Kaministikominahiko-skak Cree Nation, located in northeastern Saskatchewan, is part of Treaty 5, which was signed on Sept. 20, 1875.

At that time, Dorion explained that band representative John Cochrane signed an adhesion to the treaty in the Cumberland House Region.

To fast track the treaty signing process, the Kaministikominahiko-skak Cree Nation was amalgamated with other smaller bands or nations in "super band" amalgamations.

Over the years, many of these bands were de-amalgamated and restored as individual territories that have been recognized as distinct First Nations.

Our main focus is to make very clear that we are opposed to the imposed federal legislation. Prince Albert Grand Council director of education Edward Mirasty

But, not the Kaministikominahiko-skak Cree Nation, Dorion said, noting that several other bands in Saskatchewan remain unrecognized.

"Everybody has, according to the United Nations, everybody has the right to a good education, a good standard of living, but in our case we ... signed treaty with the crown and they made all kinds of promises to our people, but they never completed that business in the Cumberland House area," he said.

"This is close to 140 years, eh? There are quite a few of us. It's a matter of principle. Our ancestors were promised a lot of things and the government didn't deliver. It's important. It's part of that continuing oppression ... of our people.

There are currently more than 1,100 members of the Kaministikominahiko-skak Cree Nation whose lineage can be traced back to the signing of Treaty 5.

In August, the Kaministikominahiko-skak Cree Nation was one of a handful of unrecognized bands the Spruce River Folk Festival aimed to raise awareness about, Dorion said, adding that he's hopeful Sunday's meeting with Anaya results in an even greater audience.

"We want the United Nations to know that we've been pushed aside, we've been ignored, we've been denied our rights," he said.

"Their understanding of the treaty was that the land and the resources of this rich country were supposed to be shared, eh? Not taken away from us."

On Oct. 15, Anaya is expected to present his preliminary findings at a news conference in Ottawa. His final report will be presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council in September, 2014.

The House of Common is expected to resume on Oct. 16, following a period of prorogation. The government has poised itself to pass the First Nations Education Act at some point this coming session in order to have it in place in time for the next school year.

"At this point, it'll be a wait and see from the federal government," Mirasty said. "They'll have to respond ... after James Anaya takes the documents that will be presented to him on Sunday."

Click [HERE](#) for James Anaya's official website, [HERE](#) for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and [HERE](#) for an article on the Prince Albert Grand Council's opposition to the feds' First Nations Education Act.

Reserve expansion proposal raises alarms: New rules would allow First Nations bands to create satellite reserves

[Vancouver Sun](#)

October 10, 2013 10:31 AM

Kelly Sinoski

B.C. municipalities are raising concerns over a proposed federal policy change that would allow First Nations bands to buy land and create satellite reserves anywhere in B.C. - even if they're not next to their traditional territory.

A report to Metro Vancouver Wednesday warns the changes to the so-called "additions-to-reserve policy" would allow residential, commercial and industrial development in cities across B.C., resulting in the loss of land, taxes and costs associated with servicing agreements.

It could also create a "proverbial patchwork quilt" of jurisdictions, with municipalities wrangling with First Nations over bylaws and regulations on everything from fire services to house inspections.

"Under the federal proposal, there is this unrestrained ability to buy land anywhere coupled with the ability to proceed and convert it to reserve lands," said Belcarra Mayor Ralph Drew, who sits on Metro's aboriginal relations committee and is also the Metro representative to the Union of B.C. Municipalities aboriginal committee.

"(First Nations) don't necessarily have to come up with the money themselves, they just need to partner with someone who has big pockets."

The additions-to-reserve policy was developed in 1972 to allow First Nations to add land to existing reserves or to create new reserves. It had previously only allowed additions to reserves on lands next to bands' traditional territory.

Metro, which is already facing a massive on-reserve First Nations building boom across the region, maintains it realizes the benefits economic development can bring to First Nations reserves. But the proposed changes would not only create jurisdictional headaches, mayors say, but underscore ongoing concerns over funding municipal services, especially on booming reserves..

The Squamish First Nation, for instance, could see as many as 30,000 non-aboriginals living in condos on reserve land near Park Royal, while the Kwantlen First Nation in Maple Ridge and Tsleil-Waututh in North Vancouver also plan to develop

their reserve lands. But in many cases, the First Nations will pay for some services but leave local taxpayers to foot the bill for others.

Metro is also concerned the move could affect the regional growth plan, which has specified pockets for growth and development across the region.

"It doesn't matter if it's Maple Ridge or Surrey or wherever," Drew said. "When these things occur, First Nations expect municipalities to provide services; they will take water, sewer and fire protection but won't pay for libraries and recreation. Those are bones of contention now and this is only going to exacerbate it."

Drew said he not sure why the federal government is proposing to change the policy, which would allow satellite reserves in cities like Burnaby, which has no reserves, and "turn community planning on its ear," he said.

"If they bought a large block in middle of Surrey and it's a tax-free zone, imagine the impact on the surrounding businesses," Drew said.

The report also suggests that a requirement for First Nations to negotiate agreements with local governments has been watered down.

The policy doesn't apply to treaty nations like Tsawwassen. And the Musqueam First Nation maintains Metro Vancouver should not tar all other First Nations with the same brush. The small Vancouver-based band has long had an agreement with the city of Vancouver for municipal services, Musqueam band councillor Wade Grant said, and would willingly do the same in other cities if it was allowed to expand with satellite reserves.

"(First Nations) should be dealt with on an individual basis," Sparrow said. "First Nations have their own opinions, history ... the Musqueam is as different to the Squamish as Vancouver is to Burnaby. When we move forward with any initiative we want to make sure we have a good working relationship with our neighbours."

Both Metro and the UBCM plan to file a list of questions with the federal government's Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, which has extended the deadline for feedback. The federal government did not return a request for interviews by press time, referring The Vancouver Sun to its website. The province declined to comment.

Through Lacrosse, Empowerment for First Nations: A century ago, aboriginal players drew thousands to games. Now the new generation keeps tradition alive

[Megaphone Magazine](#)

October 10, 2013

Megan Stewart



*Turner Seward (left) with his father, Sam Seward.
Photo by Megan Stewart.*

Like his father and grandfather before him, Dennis "Denny" Joseph prefers to string the mesh basket of his own lacrosse stick. His favourite one, the box lacrosse stick the 56-year-old goalie calls his "bread and butter," is a hybrid piece of equipment dating back to the 1990s.

Joseph's box stick has long since been replaced, exchanged for a field lacrosse stick since he left his box team about 10 seasons ago. Besides, one side of the basket's triangle is snapped in two. "I clubbed a guy," says Joseph, his quiet voice rising as he laughs. "My crease was my own, man. To this day, I tell guys to stay out of my crease."

Box lacrosse -- the indoor version of the ball and stick field game that originated with the Iroquois (now known as the Haudenosaunee, or Six Nations Confederacy) -- is a violent and uniquely Canadian sport, born of a desire to make use of iceless hockey arenas in summertime. It's now the country's national summer sport, with a popularity that is deep but narrow.

And in British Columbia, where the sport as we know it today was introduced 150 years ago, lacrosse is empowering a new generation of aboriginal athletes.

Sport diplomacy

Lacrosse in B.C. wouldn't be what it is for aboriginal athletes today if it wasn't for Andy Paull. A visionary coach, union leader and native rights activist with the Squamish First Nation, Paull recognized lacrosse as a powerful tool to unite the

Squamish nearly a century ago as they were being displaced from their own territory by colonialists who denied them equal rights, means of self-representation, and criminalized their traditions. The Squamish found pride, agency and entertainment in a lacrosse team, the North Shore Indians.

"It was more about community and people's passion for the game, passion that still exists today for players who play under the North Shore Indians jersey," says Joseph, who won the Presidents' Cup national box lacrosse championship with the Indians in 1985 and 1993, as well as field lacrosse national championships with the Vancouver Barbarians in 1992 and 1994. Joseph is also Paull's maternal great-grandson.

Among the Squamish, Paull used lacrosse to tap into a broader indigenous identity when First Nations in Canada were actively being assimilated and intentionally denied their humanity. He recruited Iroquois from across the country to play for the North Shore, forging relationships that carry on today. Paull, who formed the Native American Indian Brotherhood (which went on to become the Assembly of First Nations), was also building connections with the dominant white society.

"He was extremely brilliant, Andy Paull," says Allan Downey, a historian who studies the rise of Squamish nationalism in relation to lacrosse. Downey is a member of the Nak'azdli First Nation near Fort St. James, a PhD candidate at Wilfrid Laurier University, and a box lacrosse player who played for the Burnaby Lakers in 2010.

"Aboriginal players are actually on the outside of the development of lacrosse in British Columbia," Downey explains. But Paull changed that.

Born in 1892 near the town of Squamish, he came of age at a time when the potlatch was outlawed. The legal profession he sought to practice was barred to a man like him, as long as he held Indian status. During his childhood, lacrosse was primarily played by white men and had yet to become the pride of the Squamish Nation as it would four decades later. In the early 1890s, the B.C. Amateur Lacrosse Association banned anyone but white athletes from its membership.

In 1920, Paull organized the all-native lacrosse team to appear at one of many so-called Indian sports days, a fair for mainstream society to marvel at what many believed to be a dying race. The Aboriginal athletes were a tremendous draw wherever they went.

"People wanted to see Aboriginal athletes because of the prevailing belief that Aboriginal peoples were going to disappear. They would come by the thousands," Downey says.

For the next decade, 12,000 fans were said to cram into the 10,500 seats at the Denman Arena in Vancouver's West End to see the team that became the North Shore Indians. The ban against Aboriginal players was quietly removed from the rulebook, as the Victorian-era values favouring amateurism made way for sports capitalism.

"This was quite ironic, given the fact non-Aboriginal Canadians are taking an Aboriginal game, claiming it as their own and then they end up barring the very people who gave it to them," Downey says. "[Paull] saw sport as an opportunity to continue what he was doing. And he loved the game, there is no question about that. He really connected, and so did the Squamish.

"They connected lacrosse to an Aboriginal game and that's what really appealed to him -- here the Squamish were playing a game that had been played in indigenous communities, including the Squamish, since time immemorial. They were just reconnecting with it."

'They were applauding, just roaring'

The broken stick Joseph cherishes is on display in his basement, along with 80-odd jerseys. One is framed, as well as a dozen sticks, black-and-white photographs and a participation medal from the 1932 Los Angeles Summer Olympics where the North Shore Indians went to play lacrosse as a demonstration sport.

That same team, bolstered by cross-country recruits from the Six Nations, travelled to Toronto in 1936 as the first all-native team to contend for the national Senior A championship, the Mann Cup. The Indians lost the series one game to three, falling to the two-time defending champions from Orillia. More than 36,000 fans attended the four games they played at Maple Leaf Gardens.

Joseph idolized the men who played for the '36 Indians, and those he watched as a child at the PNE Forum and the North Vancouver arena now known as the Harry Jerome Sports Centre. The North Shore Indians were still a draw, and their fans shook arenas with drumbeats and songs.

Among the players he watched was his uncle and Canadian lacrosse hall-of-famer Stan "Bunny" Joseph Jr., the son of a '36 Indian, who was named the league's outstanding goaltender four times and was named MVP once. He had a .707 career save percentage, a mark akin to today's professional players.

"I could barely peer over the boards and when he hit the floor -- I found out this later from the people who played with him -- they let him run out by himself and

there was maybe 800 people in the stand and everybody just stood up," Joseph says, who has framed one of his uncle's jerseys. "They were applauding, just roaring. I was like, 'I want to do that.'"

Joseph doesn't play box lacrosse with the Indians anymore, but he competes as a grandmaster at field lacrosse tournaments with the Shape Shifters, a team that takes the important Squamish figure of a two-headed serpent for its emblem instead of the profile of a Plains man in a feather headdress.

He competes alongside the same guys he grew up with playing stick-and-ball games on the Squamish reserve. A decade after his championship season with the Indians, he turned his back on box lacrosse because of political disagreements between some team organizers and the band council, on which he has sat since being elected in 1989.

Joseph now plays field lacrosse alongside Sam Seward, also 57, who still coaches the Indians, which counts his 22-year-old son Turner on the roster. "Growing up, we always had elders come in to talk to us between periods," Seward says. He's a two-time Canadian champion and a face-off specialist. "I was thinking we didn't have that anymore, but my wife said to me, 'You're the elder now.'"

The popularity of the sport among the younger Squamish is in a slump, Seward says. It's a sentiment numerous older players agree with. The work ethic isn't what it was, they say. "I'd like to see our North Shore Indians be contenders again," says Seward. "We have to get more players coming out from the res. I'd like to see more of our own guys playing. We get a little more support when we have players from the res."

'They were taught First Nations people were wiped out entirely'

Of the 16,000 athletes registered with the B.C. Lacrosse Association, 711 self-identify as Aboriginal. The legacy of the North Shore Indians can be measured today, in part, by the numbers of elementary and secondary students learning about lacrosse through the B.C. Lacrosse Association and their partnership with the Aboriginal Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Partners Council.

In two years, B.C. Lacrosse has certified 89 Aboriginal coaches and 21 referees while educators like Naomi Wasler have together made over 100 visits to B.C. schools and talked to nearly 4,000 boys and girls about the sport she's been playing since the age of four and knows as the Creator's Game.

Wasler is an elite athlete from the Beausoleil First Nation near Georgian Bay, Ontario who represented Canada on the junior and senior field lacrosse teams. This summer at the 2013 World Cup, she competed at the international championship for another nation, the Haudenosaunee.

"Lacrosse is the only sport in the world that has all-native teams that compete as a nation because of the history," she says. Competing in the Czech Republic, some Europeans marvelled at her, just as they had gaped at Aboriginal athletes in Paull's day.

"They were taught First Nations people were wiped out entirely," she says. "They would touch us and they couldn't believe we existed."

Wasler, 36, has lived in B.C. for 15 years and will coach the U16 Team B.C. boys lacrosse team at the North American Indigenous Games next summer in Regina. Sam Seward was also teaching lacrosse in the region's schools and he travelled to Cowichan for the 2008 Indigenous Games.

One of the players selected to the U16 team for 2014 is Corvin Mack, a 14-year-old Wet'suwet'en midfielder who skipped a grade and plays midget for the Vancouver Burrards. He's making a transition from a box goaltender to a midi on the field, partly because he likes to run, but mostly because field lacrosse is the fastest-growing collegiate sport in North America. Scholarships are available for thousands of athletes, more than any time in the sport's history.

Mack says he was a short, chubby kid who needed a reason to run around. "My dad heard that lacrosse is the fastest sport on two feet," he says. Lacrosse isn't an essential part of his Aboriginal identity, but the Indigenous Games are bringing more opportunities to compete and train, he adds.

After only one year playing field lacrosse, 17-year-old Selena Lasota, who grew up in Campbell River and is of the Katzie First Nation near Pitt Meadows, signed with Northwestern University, the continent's most accomplished women's varsity lacrosse team and the defending 2013 NCAA Division 1 champions.

Like Wasler, Lasota grew up playing box lacrosse with her older brothers and her Aboriginal heritage becomes more meaningful to her identity as a lacrosse player as she learns more about the sport, she says. "I think representing [myself] as an Aboriginal person, but also as a Canadian player is really cool."

Mack and Lasota are promising Aboriginal athletes and two members of a new generation of lacrosse player. Wasler and Seward pique the interest and hone the

skills of countless more when they put on workshops at B.C. schools. Some Aboriginal kids who'd never heard of lacrosse know immediately how to cradle the ball and handle the stick with very little instruction, Seward says. This behaviour is known as a "living blood memory" to Downey, the academic who studies lacrosse and its significance in Aboriginal society.

"Your Aboriginal identity in your blood has this memory inside of it. And lacrosse is part of that," Downey says. "It's something that connects Indigenous nations across North America. You really start seeing the re-empowerment of Indigenous communities through this game."

First Nations leaders to meet UN regarding Taseko project

[Vancouver Sun](#)

October 10, 2013

Peter O'Neil

First Nations leaders fighting one of B.C.'s most controversial resource development projects will get their case heard in Vancouver today by the United Nations envoy on aboriginal rights.

UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya will meet with aboriginal leaders, including members of the Tsilhqot'in National Government, who are opposing Taseko Mines' gold-copper project near Williams Lake.

Anaya, who is touring Canada to gather evidence for a report on human rights issues facing aboriginal Canadians, has written extensively on the importance of aboriginal consent before resource projects proceed.

The Supreme Court of Canada is hearing a potential landmark landclaims case involving the Tsilhqot'in next month.

Tsilhqot'in chairman Joe Alphonse is returning from two days of lobbying in Ottawa, fearful of the Harper government's approach to major projects. Both federal and B.C. scientists have expressed concerns about the risk that Taseko won't be able to keep its promise to protect Fish Lake, which will be 500 metres from a large proposed open-pit mine and 2.5 kilometres from a tailings dump.

But Alphonse said he fears the Harper government will ignore those concerns and approve the mine even if a federal review panel concludes the project poses environmental risks.

"We're not being listened to by this government," Alphonse said Wednesday. "They put the almighty dollar and politics ahead of the environment, aboriginal rights and science."

Alphonse said he is confident a panel established under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act will find plenty of flaws in Taseko's bid to construct a \$1.5-billion mine 125 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake. The federal government rejected Taseko's initial application in 2011 after a "scathing" CEAA panel report on the environmental implications of draining Fish Lake and using it as a tailings dump. The company is promising in its new application to save the lake, which the Tsilhqot'in say is cherished by area First Nations for traditional hunting and fishing.

Taseko president Russ Hallbauer, in an essay published in The Vancouver Sun last month, said mine opponents waged a "campaign of misinformation" at panel hearings over the summer.

The Tsilhqot'in countered with its own argument in The Sun, citing 22 different statements made by federal and B.C. officials expressing environmental concerns during the panel hearings.

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